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SUBJECT: MCNS - BAGHDAD SECURITY PLAN AND FORCE STRUCTURE

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission David M. Satterfield for Reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (S//REL GBR AUS) SUMMARY: The Ministerial Committee for National Security (MCNS) met July 16 to hear MNF-I briefings on the progress of the Iraqi Army training and on the strategic view of the Baghdad Security Plan Phase II. The Iraqis expressed the desire for more Iraqi troops to be trained, and for training to be accelerated by 50 percent. We gently pushed back, stressing the importance of quality training and instilling good leadership skills for ultimate success. We received an Iraqi pledge to reform the Ministry of Interior (MOI), and also to integrate the Facilities Protective Service (FPS) into the MOI. The Iraqis accepted our strategic view of Phase II without any changes, with a follow-on and more detailed operational view to be submitted to the MCNS next week. END SUMMARY

12. (S//REL GBR AUS) Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki chaired the MCNS on the evening of July 16 to hear two briefings: from LTG Marty Dempsey, Commander of the Multinational Strategic Training Command - Iraq (MNSTC-I) on training of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) including the Iraqi Army (IA) and the Iraqi Police (IP), and from LTG Peter Chiarelli, Commander of the Multinational Corps - Iraq (MNC-I) on the initial broad brush explanation of Phase II of the Baghdad Security Plan (also known as Operation Ma'an ila al-Amam (Together Forward)). Present for the Iraqis were Deputy Prime Minister Barham Saleh, Minister of Interior Jawad al-Bolani, Minister of Defense (MOD) Abd al-Qadir, National Security Advisor Dr. Mowaffak al-Rubaie, General Abubakir and General Shuwani. The Coalition was represented by Charge d'Affaires, a.i. David Satterfield, UK Ambassador William Patey, MNF-I Commanding GEN George Casey, MNF-I DCG LTG Robert Fry, and Pol-Mil Counselor.

IA TRAINING

13. (S//REL GBR AUS) Dempsey briefed on the IA force structure and on the progress of MNSTC-I's two year training plan. Although numbers are important, quality is more important, and leadership is most important, he said. The IA has achieved a better ethnic and religious mix than is realized. The insurgency requires small unit warfare tactics that stresses obtaining the trust and support of the population, while large units and heavy weapons are counterproductive. The near-term goal is to equip the IA with older, but still adequate, east-bloc weapons. The next phase will be to modernize with better weapons. At this point, the Iraqi members debated the merits of "old eastern weapons and modern western tactics" with Shuwani suggesting that the IA infantry divisions were too lightly armed to be a "real army." Rubaie and Al-Qadir responded that the mix of equipment and tactics

was cost-effective, and further light weapons were appropriate to fight terrorists. Afterwards Iraq could worry about equipment to defend against any hostile neighbors. The group agreed to increase IA numbers to achieve 110 per cent of authorized battalion strength to compensate for unplanned absences due to annual leave, battle wounds, etc.

POLICE - GOOD, BUT LEADERSHIP IS A CHALLENGE

¶4. (S//REL GBR AUS) Turning to police training, Dempsey pointed out that the police are much more complex than the army, who merely defend the country. The local police, border police (including customs police), commando police, and national police all protect and serve the people. MNF-I's real goal is to train the Iraqi police to establish and maintain civil security, not to focus exclusively on military security. The police have good capabilities, but there are leadership challenges.

INTEGRATING FPS INTO THE MOI

¶5. (S//REL GBR AUS) In response, Bolani reaffirmed his intention to "rehabilitate" the MOI, purging the ministry of corruption, sectarianism, and instilling a spirit of accountability and cash rewards for excellent performance, and punishments for crimes. The goal is for MOI to regain the people's trust. He is developing a six-month plan to reform MOI, and by this September he intends to seek out qualified MOI officials to make MOI more professional. He added that the Facilities Protective Service (FPS) is a big

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challenge because the number of FPS employees is large, and several years ago they were often selected for employment for political reasons rather than professional qualifications. A committee formed by Al-Qadir, Al-Wa'ili and Bolani himself would present a plan to integrate the FPS into the MOI.

PM ASKS FOR ACCELERATED TROOP TRAINING

¶6. (S//REL GBR AUS) In the ensuing discussion, Maliki asked if training of the next batch of 10,000 IA recruits could be accelerated by 50 percent, especially if an effort were made to attract recruits who had been soldiers in the old army, who therefore would start training with some background. Dempsey repeated that quality was better than quantity, and that accelerating training now would present logistical synchronization problems. In the end, Dempsey suggested that these issues be given to the new working group to examine the ISF's optimal force structure, as had been previously requested by Maliki.

BAGHDAD SECURITY PLAN - PHASE II

¶7. (S//REL GBR AUS) Chiarelli gave a broad overview of the proposed Phase II of the Baghdad Security Plan for the MCNS' approval. The plan would seek to secure Baghdad from the "inside out" by blocking operation of death squads, which would then likely result in a decrease in "tit-for-tat" sectarian violence. Existing forces in Baghdad would be redeployed, augmented by an increase in new forces brought to the Baghdad area. Baghdad would be divided into two sectors - east and west of the Tigris River. The main emphasis first would be to bring peace to the western sector, and later the east, while inhibiting the movement of illegal armed groups (IAG) from one bank to another to conduct assassinations and murders. Troops would seal off certain neighborhoods through checkpoints and, if necessary, conduct house-to-house

searches for terrorists and illegal weapons. As one neighborhood was pacified, the cordon would be expanded outwards. The one canal running roughly parallel to the Tigris in east Baghdad would have a series of checkpoints at bridges to inhibit IAG movement. Eventually, the cordon operation would target Sadr City, though only after success west Baghdad and other areas of east Baghdad. In addition to the cordon operations of Phase II, some troops would continue Phase I's raids against known and suspected AQI terrorists and AIF death squad leaders. (Note: Baghdad's western sector is mainly Sunni, and the eastern sector is mainly Shia. End Note.). After discussion of what would be involved in house-to-houses searches, the MCNS authorized Chiarelli to start more detailed operational planning of Phase II, and to report his findings to the MCNS on Sunday, July 23.

COMMENT

18. (S//REL GBR AUS) Over the past few weeks, Maliki has privately expressed skepticism about the quality of IA troops and the police. Dempsey's brief was intended to give him more information about the armed forces under his control, and to boost his confidence. Dempsey repeatedly invited Maliki to pay a visit to a training facility so he could see the standards that the IA were achieving. The debate among the MCNS members revealed some concerns about the present training and force structure plans, which many of them implied they were hearing in detail for the first time. Some Iraqi modifications to these plans will be considered and adopted in the future to enhance Iraqi buy-in to the plan. By contrast, the proposed Phase II portion had been discussed with several senior Iraqis beforehand, and their suggestions were incorporated into the strategic plan presented to the MCNS. As a result, the MCNS was more comfortable with the Phase II plan, and authorized MNC-I to launch more detailed operational planning.

KHALILZAD